



Alternative Livelihoods Update

August 2006 • Issue 13

CASH-FOR-WORK BRIDGES SHORT- AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT IN THE EASTERN REGION

USAID's alternative livelihoods program in the east is currently implementing a number of innovative Cash-For-Work (CFW) projects across the eastern provinces, as a means to achieving the long-term goal of a vibrant, growth-oriented agricultural economy independent of illicit poppy production.



PHOTO: USAID/ALP/E

The first 2km length of the Darunta Cobblestone Road was formally inaugurated for public use.

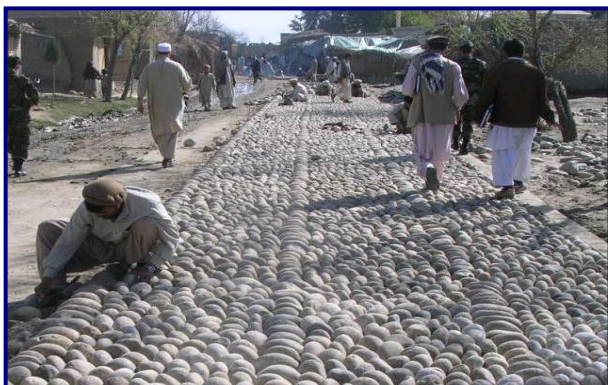


PHOTO: USAID/ALP/E

Cash-for-work laborers in Laghman province work to finish a stretch of cobblestone road. As farmers shift away from poppy production, these roads will provide farmers with access to markets for their products.

Three Cash-for-Work projects were recently completed in the east, while work continues on 37 ongoing projects in the Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kunar provinces. The employment rate stands at 4,766 workers per day. A cumulative 558,011 employment days have been generated in the eastern provinces to date.

Of the different types of CFW projects underway, cobblestone road-building represents a successful example of the impact these projects can have on both the short- and long-term prosperity of the region.

Over the short-term, CFW road building projects provide farmers and wage laborers, who might have otherwise engaged in or supported opium production, with a licit employment opportunity and immediate source of income.

Beyond their benefits as a short-term economic safety net, the cobblestone roads constitute the infrastructure necessary for long-term economic development. These roads provide the public and government with a relatively low cost, low maintenance, and more effective alternative to dirt roads. As these roads spread across the eastern provinces, they open access to markets for high value agricultural products, broaden the availability of social services to a wider range of citizens, and offer the community a tangible investment in developing the licit economy of Afghanistan's future.

"Before USAID started its work in our district, the main road was in a very bad condition for decades. We have been facing problems in traveling and transporting agricultural produce to the nearest market," says Abdul Marten, a 58-year old resident of Nangarhar province. "With USAID's road project, I hope we will be able to repair the road ensuring proper and easy traveling and transportation to other parts in and outside the province. I personally thank USAID for having a tremendous road project in our area."

Through CFW projects like the cobblestone roads, USAID is helping to provide the citizens of the eastern provinces with viable, short-term income alternatives to poppy production while laying the foundations for the long-term growth of a dynamic, market-centered agricultural economy.



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AFGHANISTAN

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Alternative Livelihoods Program Making Progress in Afghanistan:

- Over **4,450 km of irrigation canals** have been rehabilitated affecting **290,000 hectares** of land. Irrigation is critical to produce high-value agriculture, such as grapes.
- In Nangarhar and Laghman, **1,500 hectares of commercial orchards** have been planted and another 1,500 will be planted next year. Once fully developed, these orchards will produce high value fruits and nuts increasing exports and the income potential for 5,000 farmers. About 2,800 farmers received training to improve crop production in November.
- This spring, USAID distributed **seeds and fertilizer to more than 112,400 farmers** in the eastern, southern, and northern regions.
- In Fall 2005, USAID distributed **40,000 metric tons of fertilizer** and **14,000 metric tons of wheat and vegetable seed** to **550,000 farmers in all 34 provinces**. This effort successfully reached 97% of its target beneficiaries and included anti-poppy messages.
- Rapid implementation of the cash for work program generated over **4.6 million work days of paid labor** and resulted in **over \$18 million in wages paid to almost 370,000 laborers**.
- Over **4,000 women in 13 districts benefited from household income generating activities** in Nangarhar province. Projects focus on handicrafts, embroidery, tailoring, small-scale agricultural processing and training to develop agricultural skills.



PHOTO: USAID/ALPIE

Wholesalers of the Eastern Region display their fresh produce at the Serena Hotel in Kabul. In the last six months USAID contractors have trained producers, district assemblers and wholesalers to meet higher standards of quality, food safety, and packaging.

Other Developments across the Eastern Region:

Agricultural Marketing and Production: Final preparations are being made for the first edition of the eastern region agricultural trade fair "Jalalabad 2006." The fair will bring together farmers and farmers' organizations, district-level produce assemblers, fruit and vegetable wholesalers, processors, and exporters and provide them with the opportunity to learn about the latest agricultural technologies, see the range and quality of commodities being produced in the region, and establish additional market contacts. By facilitating the interaction of different actors along the supply chain, the event will further the growth of a licit agricultural economy that can provide Afghan farmers with a viable alternative to the illicit opium trade.

Gender and Micro-Enterprise Development: Thirty-three self-help groups, including approximately 500 women, were recently established in the Laghman province for the purpose of vocational training. As a result of this micro-enterprise program, the participants will be able to promote their home-based businesses and enhance their families' incomes.